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## Conservation

### Pledge

I give my  
pledge as an American  
to save and faithfully to  
defend from waste the  
natural resources of  
my country—its soil  
and minerals, its  
forests, waters  
and wildlife

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The 1967 Louisiana wild turkey season opens April 1 and continues through April 23. There is growing interest in wild turkey hunting in the state for two important reasons. One is that the wild turkey is North America's largest game bird and the other is that a restocking program being carried out by the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission has greatly extended the range where turkeys were once present but depleted through over-hunting. As the program continues, the Commission hopes to establish flocks in every area of the state where there is suitable range.  
Photo by Bob Dennie

# LOUISIANA *Conservationist*

LOUISIANA WILD LIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

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# Results of Pass-A-Loutre Waterfowl Season

**L**OUISIANA WATERFOWL hunters enjoyed record breaking success on the Pass-a-Loutre Waterfowl Management Area during the 1966-67 season. On 24 morning hunts, with sportsmen from throughout the state participating, 5,343 birds were bagged. Improved marsh conditions with an abundance of natural food had attracted ducks to the area and favorable weather provided better hunting conditions.

The Refuge Division of the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission operated nine public camps on Pass-a-Loutre Public Shooting Area this past season. Three of the camps which were destroyed by Hurricane Betsy in September of 1965 were completely rebuilt and were in service for the 1966-67 waterfowl season. All were ready for the first group of hunters who arrived on November 18. Twelve hunts were conducted throughout the season, each hunt lasting two days plus an additional day for traveling. Shooting was allowed on four mornings each week; Tuesday - Wednesday and Saturday - Sunday. This prevented over-shooting the area and maintained huntable concentrations of ducks throughout the entire waterfowl season.

Interest in duck hunting at Pass-a-Loutre has steadily increased year after year, with 2,298 applications this season. Applications came from all parts of the state including Monroe, Shreveport and Alexandria, although the majority of the applications were from New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Covington and Hammond areas. Applications were also received from adjacent states, although first choice was given to resident hunters. A total of 864 permits were issued for the public camps with 715 hunters making the trip.

The total kill of waterfowl by hunters participating in the public camp hunting program for the 1966-67 waterfowl season is presented in Table 1. Gadwall ranked first in the bag with 2,556 birds taken in twelve two day hunts. This made up 48 per cent of the total ducks killed. Baldpate was second with 553 birds taken and pintail was third with 369 birds tallied. Lesser



Two hunters returning from a hunt at Pass-a-Loutre.

scaup ranked fourth with 310. The scaup did not move inland until mid-December and did not show up in the bag checks until hunt No. 8, when they appeared not only as bonus ducks but in some cases made up the entire bag limit.

The average daily kill per hunter effort (3.3) was the highest recorded for the past three years, 2.36 for 1965-66 and 2.16 for 1964-65 waterfowl season. This could be attributed to several factors. First the season opened earlier than in past years and hunters could take advantage of the high tides caused by the prevailing southern winds. This made hunting easier as all parts of the marshes were easily accessible with this high

## TOTAL KILL BY SPECIES FOR PASS-A-LOUTRE PUBLIC CAMP

1966-1967 WATERFOWL SEASON

Species	Hunt Number												Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Mallard .....	17	9	18	7	17	5	27	9	3	1	9	4	126
Gadwall .....	253	227	309	111	215	349	224	144	198	194	166	196	2,556
Baldpate .....	77	48	58	48	70	22	51	39	68	30	33	9	553
Green-winged Teal ...	16	5	10	20	20	1	22	11	23	4	15	23	170
Blue-winged Teal ....	22	11	20	8	22	5	8	9	3	10	8	6	132
Shoveler .....	23	17	36	8	22	20	22	15	33	34	15	11	256
Pintail .....	42	49	40	22	22	12	30	54	38	23	34	3	369
Mottled .....	24	15	2	2	22	3	11	8	4	1	2	4	98
Redhead .....	2	2	1	0	0	0	1	4	2	16	0	0	28
Canvasback .....	0	4	4	2	0	3	8	1	6	4	0	4	36
Lesser Scaup .....	1	1	2	4	9	4	4	29	57	60	58	81	310
Ringneck .....	13	11	3	9	3	0	12	4	1	13	6	3	78
Ruddy .....	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Merganser .....	1	0	3	3	4	0	6	1	1	1	4	2	26
Total Ducks .....	493	399	496	234	426	424	426	328	437	381	350	346	4,740
Total Geese													76
Total Coots													527
Grand Total													5,343





A dense stand of freshwater three square grass being examined by Director Glasgow during the summer of 1966. Stands, such as these, attracted thousands of waterfowl to Pass-a-Loutre.

tide. Also, the hunters, who as a general rule are not familiar with the area, were able to select better hunting blinds.

Information on wind direction and velocity was obtained from the U. S. Weather Bureau Office in Boothville, Louisiana for the entire 1966-67 waterfowl season. This information indicates the prevailing winds on the Lower Delta were from a southerly direction and occasionally shifting to north and northwest. As long as these winds blew from a southerly direction the tides remained well above normal. North and northwesterly winds were very often accompanied by rain as this cold front moved through the area. As long

as this frontal system was present the weather remained calm and clear, although heavy cloud cover was sometimes associated with this type of system. This type of weather conditions was always accompanied by tides well below normal.

Hunter success could be directly related to the weather conditions existing at the time on the lower delta, as this area is severely affected by tidal flow. Hunter success was highest with south to southeasterly winds. Also, on the first day of a weather change, to a northerly direction, hunter success was high. Each day this northerly wind persisted, tides were below normal and hunter success decreased.

Fog is typical on the lower delta in the early morning hours and later afternoon, but would dissipate shortly after day light. Although on one hunt this condition lasted two days and greatly reduced the waterfowl kill and hampered boat travel.

A second reason for the heavy waterfowl kill was that the marshes of the lower delta were in excellent condition as a result of the 1965 hurricane. Although this hurricane caused severe damage to homes, buildings and livestock, it actually rejuvenated plant growth on Pass-a-Loutre. As the hurricane force winds swept across ponds and open bays on the delta it took with it most of the organic debris which had built up for several years on the pond bottoms. This organic debris is a semi-liquid ooze which forms from an annual buildup of decaying vegetation. The elimination of the organic buildup or semi-liquid bottoms which are not firm enough to support plant growth provided the marshes with optimum growing conditions. Tremendous stands of delta duck potato, freshwater three square, and parrot feather were produced this past spring. As a result of this several thousand waterfowl wintered on Pass-a-Loutre this year.

On the open portion of Pass-a-Loutre hunters enjoyed similar success to the camp hunters. A



Technician tabulating numbers and kinds of ducks killed at Pass-a-Loutre.



Open bays and shallow ponds provide ideal conditions for production of desirable duck food plants at Pass-a-Loutre.



total of 878 free permits were issued during the 1966-67 waterfowl season. This compares favorably with the number of permits issued during the 1964-65 season, however, it is approximately 300 more than were issued during the 1965-66 season when many hunters who normally hunted at Pass-a-Loutre were occupied with making repairs to their homes and property from the damages caused by Hurricane Betsy.

Portions of Pass-a-Loutre open for free hunting consists of the more remote sections along

Pass-a-Loutre, Southeast and South passes, where dense stand of delta duck potato and freshwater three square were produced. These areas attracted large concentrations of ducks, as well as Blue and Snow geese and provides some of the finest goose shooting in Southeast Louisiana.

In final analysis Pass-a-Loutre hunters experienced one of the finest duck seasons in many years. Weather conditions and food for ducks were ideal for the most part and shooting was excellent. \*



A group of successful hunters displaying their first day's kill.